

UNCLASSIFIED

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21
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02

IO-13 /072 W

109147

R 201450Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5713
INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release (☐) Excise (☐) Deny

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 3343

Exemption(s):

Declassify: (☐) In Part (☒) In Full

(☐) Classify as (☐) Extend as (☐) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR, UY
SUBJECT: URUGUAYANS REPORTED ARRESTED

REF: STATE 121966

1. ZELMAR MICHELINI, URUGUAYAN NATIONAL RESIDING IN ARGENTINA, WAS TAKEN FROM HIS HOTEL ROOM IN CENTRAL BUENOS AIRES IN EARLY MORNING MAY 18, BY GROUP OF UNIDENTIFIED MEN. WELL-INFORMED SOURCE TOLD US THAT WHEN ASKED BY HOTEL STAFF FOR IDENTIFICATION, GROUP LEADER REPLIED, "THESE GUNS ARE OUR IDENTIFICATION."

2. NEWSPAPER "LA OPINION" MAY 19 CARRIED FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE ON DETENTION OF MICHELINI, WHO, PAPER CLAIMED, HAS BEEN ONE OF ITS INTERNATIONAL EDITORS FOR LAST THREE YEARS. ARTICLE NOTED THAT MICHELINI HAD BEEN HOODED AND TAKEN AWAY BY UNIDENTIFIED GROUP. "LA OPINION" AUTHORITIES REPORTED INCIDENT TO MIN INTERIOR HARGUINDEGUY, WHO PROMISED TO INVESTIGATE.

3. "LA OPINION" CITED MICHELINI'S RECORD AS URUGUAYAN CONGRESSMAN AND SENATOR, AND EMPHASIZED THAT HE IS WELL-REGARDED IN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CIRCLES. PAPER ALSO CLAIMED THAT HE HAD HAD RECENT INVITATION FROM GROUP OF US SENATORS TO VISIT US (SEE 75 BUENOS AIRES 2425, 75 MONTEVIDEO 1165, 75 STATE 082850) AFTER LEARNING OF [REDACTED]

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"KIDNAPPING" OF MICHELINI, PAPER SENT MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANTS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS MEETING IN CARACAS. ARTICLE EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN OVER IMPLICATIONS OF ARREST FOR FREEDOM OF PRESS. AT NO POINT DID ARTICLE DIRECTLY CHARGE THAT GOA RESPONSIBLE FOR ARREST, BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT IN ANY READER'S MIND THAT ACTION WAS INDEED CARRIED OUT BY SECURITY FORCES.

4. RELIABLE SOURCE IN "LA OPINION" TOLD EMBOFF MAY 19 THAT STAFF IS CONVINCED MICHELINI ARREST WAS NOT RPT NOT MEANT AS INTIMIDATION OF PRESS, ALTHOUGH THIS IS ONLY LINE UPON WHICH PAPER CAN HANG ITS EFFORTS TO FREE HIM. SOURCE SAID THAT HIGH GOA OFFICIAL RECENTLY TOLD HIM THAT GOA REGARDED MICHELINI AS "COMMUNIST."

5. USIS PRESS OFFICER WHO KNOWS MICHELINI REPORTS THAT HE MET WITH MICHELINI LAST WEEK AND MICHELINI APPARENTLY HAD NO INKLING HE MIGHT HAVE PROBLEM WITH GOA. PRESS OFFICER POINTS OUT THAT IN REALITY MICHELINI WAS FAR FROM BEING "INTERNATIONAL EDITOR" OF "LA OPINION"; AT MOST HE COULD BE DESCRIBED AS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PAPER. PAPER APPARENTLY USING STORY FOR DUAL PURPOSE HELPING MICHELINI AND FOR CRITICIZING GOA REPRESSION IN GENERAL. OTHER SOURCES HAVE REPORTED THAT MICHELINI ARREST WAS CARRIED OUT BY ARMY SECURITY, AND THAT HE IS BEING HELD BY ARMY.

6. HIGH GOA OFFICIALS INCLUDING MIN INTERIOR HARGUINDEGUY, SUBSEC PRESIDENCY YOFRE AND JUNTA MEMBER ADMIRAL MASSERA, HAVE PERSONALLY ASSURED "LA OPINION" EDITOR TIMERMAN THAT THEY KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ABDUCTION OF MICHELINI OR HIS PRESENT WHEREABOUTS. TIMERMAN (PROTECT) DOES NOT PUT MUCH FAITH IN THEIR ASSURANCES; WE SHARE HIS FEELING THAT SUCH AN OPERATION WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT WITHOUT GOA ACQUIESCENCE.

7. "LA OPINION" SOURCE KNOWS HECTOR GUTIERREZ RUIZ SLIGHTLY, AND DESCRIBED HIM AS HAVING SAME GENERAL URUGUAYAN POLITICAL BACKGROUND AS MICHELINI. HE WAS NOT APPARENTLY AS ACTIVE OR WELL KNOWN AS MICHELINI, AND BEYOND FACT THAT HE ALSO WAS APPARENTLY ARRESTED, WE HAVE SO FAR NO REAL INFORMATION ABOUT HIM.

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8. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (BUENOS AIRES 3140), GOA HAS ASSURED UNHCR THAT NO DEPORTATIONS WILL BE CARRIED OUT, AND WE HAVE TO DATE NO CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT SUCH "POLITICAL" DEPORTATIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE.
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